



# NEWS RELEASE

## Lolo National Forest

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United States  
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service  
Lolo National Forest  
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## Lolo NF to Analyze Fire Salvage Opportunities

Missoula, MT. – Foresters and resource specialist have begun work to assess timber salvage opportunities within areas burned by this past summer's Jocko Lakes and Chippy Creek Fires. The approximate timeline for the two projects calls for completion of environmental documents by the fall or winter of 2008 and salvage harvest logging beginning as early as next fall and winter. Some salvage would be done in over-snow conditions, depending on resource needs and soil resiliency. The Jocko Lakes project calls for salvage over an area of approximately 2,000 acres and the Chippy Creek project calls for salvage over an area of up to 3,750 acres.

Across the forest, approximately 140,000 acres burned during the summer of 2007. The Chippy Creek Fire burned approximately 47,500 acres on the Lolo National Forest and the Jocko Lakes Fire burned approximately 11,603 acres of forest system lands. Of those total acres the Forest has narrowed salvage opportunities to a total of approximately 6,000 acres – or less than five percent of the total burned area. About 83 percent of the Jocko Lakes burned area and about 92 percent of the Chippy Creek burned area would remain undisturbed as a post-fire landscape.

The projects would also provide for restoration and road work, to include:

- Replacing undersized culverts
- Herbicide spraying of noxious weeds on roads used to haul timber
- Road maintenance and improvements on roads used to haul timber
- Decommissioning or storage of some roads that are not needed for current or future access
- Replanting 8,250 acres in the Chippy Creek burned area and 2,000 acres in the Jocko Lakes burned area

Within the Chippy Creek and Jocko Lakes projects new road construction would be minimal – less than 3 miles of temporary road for both projects and no permanent road construction. A portion of the Chippy Creek project lies within what is designated as an "Inventoried Roadless Area." Some parts of the area however do contain roads and previous harvest areas. The Chippy Creek proposal does not call for any new roads, nor change the roadless characteristics of the area as allowed under the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule).

Quick Facts on the MacGregor/Thompson Roadless Area:

Total acres: 26,844

Total square miles: 41.9

Total miles of road: 33.6

Miles of Road per square mile: .8

Other burned areas across the forest were ruled out for timber salvage because of a lack of access or other resource concerns. Some areas were not considered because they were in proposed Wilderness or undeveloped Inventoried Roadless Areas (no existing road system). The forest has benefited up to this point from groups who have expressed a willingness to collaborate in these projects. Future public involvement will help shape the future projects as the forest moves through the environmental analysis process.

Harvest in both projects would be governed by a variety of design elements to maintain the post-fire landscape. Those elements include retention of old growth stands and large, “legacy” trees and snags; use of winter tractor logging on severely burned sites to minimize impacts to soils, and buffer zones near riparian areas.

The environmental analyses will be separate for each project and will include opportunities for public comment. Public comments will be reviewed and used to help develop alternatives to the Forest’s initial proposals.

For information please contact: Lolo National Forest Public Affairs Office (406 329-1024); Seeley Lake District Ranger Tim Love for the Jocko Lakes project (406) 677-3905, Plains/Thompson Falls District Ranger Randy Hojem for the Chippy Creek project (406) 826-4308.

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